



Life Governor recipients Leonie Hoskins, Maree Markby, Ann Stevens and Dale Russell.

Honouring long serving staff and supporters

Grampians Health has celebrated the dedication and commitment of staff and community members at special ceremonies held to honour those who have completed significant periods of service.

Over 150 staff members from Horsham and Dimboola who have completed 10 and more years of service over 2023 and 2024 were honoured at the event held on 26 November.

This included Jenny Thomson, who has completed a remarkable 50 years of service at Wimmera Base Hospital this year. Throughout her time at Grampians Health Horsham, Jenny's unwavering commitment to excellence in patient care and her leadership in the Operating Suite have

made her an invaluable asset to both her team and the community.

Anne Launer, Helen Batty, Susan Burns, Helen Greig, and Frank Marklew were also honoured for completing 45 years or more of service at Horsham. Jillian Roberts, Krystyna Wesolek, Maree Markby and Leonie Hoskins were recognised for completing 40 years of service.

CEO Dale Fraser presented the service awards, expressing admiration and gratitude on behalf of the organisation.

"These individuals have dedicated their lives to the care and health of others, which is already a noteworthy path," he said.

Four Life Governor awards were also presented, which is an

honour bestowed on staff members, remarkable volunteers, donors, and consumer representatives who have demonstrated outstanding commitment, dedication, and support to the organisation.

Dale Russell, founding member of the Horsham Branch of the Blue Ribbon Foundation, and Ann Stevens, Vice President and a long-serving member of the Wimmera Base Hospital Ladies Auxiliary and a volunteer with the WHCG Friends of the Foundation, were honoured with a Life Governor award. Staff members Maree Markby and Leonie Hoskins were also appointed as Life Governors, recognising their incredible contributions to Grampians Health.



Avoid mozzie bites this summer!

Warm and wet weather creates ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. Avoid mozzie bites by following these simple steps:

- Cover up with long, loose-fitting clothing
- Use mosquito repellents containing Picaridin or DEET on all exposed skin
- Mosquito-proof your home and campsite with flyscreens on doors and windows
- Make sure there is no stagnant water around your campsite
- Use 'knockdown' fly spray, mosquito coils or plug-in repellent where you gather to sit or eat outdoors
- Don't forget the kids – always check the insect repellent label. On babies, you might need to spray or rub repellent on their clothes instead of their skin. Avoid applying repellent to the hands of babies or young children

Wesley on a mission for Uganda

A medical student at Wimmera Base Hospital has committed to volunteering at a mission in Uganda this December.

Wesley Plange is in the third year of medical studies with Deakin University and has been on placement at Horsham as part of a 12-month training program that includes working in Emergency, Anaesthetics, Surgery and General Medicine.

He is in a team of 15 registrars, interns and medical students travelling from Australia, as part of the Mission Manny program to service the remote region of Rakai in South Uganda.

Wesley said he was alerted to the program by a colleague who works as a registrar at Alfred Hospital.

"He and some of my seniors from Deakin travel over each year to volunteer and I decided I want to be a part of that as well," Wesley said.

"I spent my formative years in Ballarat and Stawell but I have roots in Ghana.

"I have travelled to Africa, Asia and the Pacific and this has particularly spurred my interest in public health.

"I've experienced rural communities but I have also seen the third world health setting and that has all inspired my pursuit to help. I've got a big interest in public health promotion and serving rural and regional communities."

Wesley said his role was to help spread the word and ask for donations to pay for medical supplies for Mission Manny.

"We all self-fund our own trips so the donations are purely for the medical supplies to service the community. We'll be there for about two weeks and we hope to service about 2000 people in that time."



Long-serving volunteers receive top honours



[L-R] – Paul Lovell, Una Faux and Leesa Thornley (daughter of the late Cynthia Knight) are pictured receiving their awards from Geoff Sharp, CEO of Volunteering Victoria.

Three of Grampians Health's longest serving volunteers were honoured for their service at the recent Victorian Public Healthcare Awards.

Horsham's Una Faux and the late Cynthia Knight, along with Ballarat's Paul Lovell were honoured and celebrated for their service at the ceremony that recognised invaluable contributions of volunteers in Victoria's hospitals who have served for 30 years or more.

Cynthia and Una have volunteered at Grampians Health Horsham for 32 years and 34 years respectively, while Paul has been an integral part of the volunteer team at Grampians Health Ballarat for over 35 years.

"Our volunteers are the heart and soul of our operations. Their unwavering dedication and selfless service have made a significant impact on the lives of our patients and staff, and they continue to touch the lives of many," said Chief Executive Officer Dale Fraser.

"We are incredibly proud to honour Cynthia, Una and Paul for their extraordinary contributions and we're grateful to have them as part of our team. Their commitment and compassion exemplify the very best of our community."

Dale specially remembered Cynthia, who was honoured posthumously following her passing in 2024.

Cynthia was a dedicated volunteer with the Wimmera Base Hospital (WBH) Ladies Auxiliary in Horsham since 1992.

Her tireless efforts helped the Ladies Auxiliary raise a significant amount of funds for new equipment, benefiting the Horsham community and surrounding areas.

Cynthia's positivity, dedication, and sincerity made her a valued member of the Auxiliary and an integral part of Grampians Health Horsham. Despite grappling with health issues in

recent years, Cynthia remained committed to helping the community through her work with the auxiliary.

Una started volunteering in the 1980s at our Kurrajong Lodge aged care community, spurred by her mother's residency there until her passing. Yearning for the companionship and connection, she began visiting a few times weekly and engaged in various activities.

Over time, she became a valuable member of the team, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of the residents at Kurrajong Lodge.

Today Una still goes in every alternate Monday and reads to the residents or brings in interesting news items and does a show and tell.

Grampians Health extends our sincere gratitude to our dear volunteers.



Horsham recognised as national leader in stroke response

Typically, health care professionals follow the catch cry “focus on people, not statistics”.

But for Grampians Health Stroke Coordinator Deidre Rennick, statistics matter just as much as individuals.

Deidre has access to stroke-related data from more than 60 hospitals across Australia and is constantly comparing Horsham’s performance.

If, on average, it takes longer for someone in Horsham to receive life-saving medication than their city counterpart, Deidre wants to know why.

If another hospital improves its treatment times, recovery rates or rehabilitation outcomes, Deidre and her team figure out how to match it.

It’s this determination to keep stride with the best research

and outcomes that has earned Grampians Health Horsham another two national awards for stroke care in 2023.

The first award, for ‘data quality’, recognises Deidre’s impeccable record-keeping.

The second – an Australian Stroke Coalition Quality Stroke Service Distinction Award – recognises that outcomes for stroke patients in Horsham are among the best in Australia.

“The recommendations around how we care for stroke patients keep getting tweaked and, by taking part in national trials, we can remain at the forefront,” Deidre said.

“We benchmark our performance with the top hospitals, in real-time, and we’re always trying to look at ways to improve.”

Deidre is involved in a patient’s care, from the moment they present to hospital, to their discharge from acute or rehabilitation care. Continuity of care is provided by the Community Rehabilitation Nurses who make sure patients don’t slip through the gap.

She, along with allied health professionals, doctors and specialists, assess and document every step of patients’ progress.

As a hospital, and a nation, this meticulous attention to detail has transformed outcomes for Australian stroke victims.

“We need this work to continue, because I absolutely know we’re making a difference.” she said.

Enhancing care options through collaboration

Grampians Health has benefited from increased collaboration across our sites over the past year, playing a key role in making care more accessible to regional Victorians and increasing care options across the Grampians region.

Our commitment to further enhance care was reinforced at the 2024 annual general meeting held on 27 November at Edenhope.

"One of our key priorities when we came together as Grampians Health was to deliver care closer to home and over the past year, I am proud to see the steps we've taken to increase our services and provide care that is responsive to local needs," said Dale Fraser, Chief Executive Officer.

"The collaboration between our campuses has been instrumental in increasing the range and quality of services we offer. This teamwork ensures that our regional communities have access to the care they need without having to travel long distances."

Achievements in the last year include increased operational governance and oversight across Ballarat and Horsham Intensive Care Units, an expansion of care at home programs to include paediatric care at home, improved allied health services across its sites, and enhanced oncology services across campuses to deliver care closer to home.

We have also made strides in reducing wait times for elective surgery through a two-year elective surgery reform project

through the Grampians Region Health Services Partnership. In addition to reducing wait times, the project has expanded capacity and maximised throughput of surgical services within the Grampians region.

"These achievements were made possible because of our unified efforts as Grampians Health. Our commitment to working together has not only improved service delivery but also strengthened our ability to respond to the unique needs of our regional population," Dale said.

During the AGM we also took the opportunity to thank outgoing Board Chair, Bill Brown for his service following his resignation. The Hon. Rob Knowles AO has been appointed as Interim Chair.

Attendees at the 2024 Grampians Health AGM



Digital Health Skills program to upskill workforce

Grampians Health is rolling out a new pilot program to further enhance digital skills of our clinical, administrative, and digital health information technology staff, ensuring they are well-equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of healthcare technology.

The Digital Health Skills project, which will be delivered in partnership with RMIT and Cisco, is part of the Victorian government's \$4.4 million Skills Solutions Partnerships program that aims to address critical skills shortages with new training courses to help industries upskill and grow their workforce. Grampians Health's pilot program will seek to advance the digital competency of healthcare staff.

"Our commitment to digital innovation is at the heart of this initiative. By equipping our staff with advanced digital skills, we are not only enhancing patient care but also ensuring that our workforce is prepared for the future of healthcare," said Kate Nolan, Chief Information Officer at Grampians Health.

"This pilot program is a testament to our dedication to continuous improvement and excellence in healthcare delivery.

"In today's rapidly evolving healthcare environment, increasing our digital competency is essential. Healthcare staff need to be proficient with digital tools to provide the highest quality of care, protect patient data, and adapt to new technologies.

"Grampians Health's Digital Health Skills pilot program ensures our team is ready to meet these challenges head-on, ultimately benefiting our staff, patients and the broader community," Kate said.

Some of the key benefits of the project include equipping staff with skills to leverage digital tools such as generative AI and cybersecurity to improve decision-making, efficiency, strengthen adherence to data security and increase workforce adaptability to new technologies.

The program is tailored to meet the needs of the regional public healthcare workforce and aligns with the Victorian Government Digital Health Roadmap and the National Nursing and Midwifery Digital Health Capability Framework.



[L-R]: Professor Vishaal Kishore, RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab; Ben Dawson, Cisco Australia & New Zealand; Nithya Solomon, Health Transformation Lab, RMIT; Mohneesh Mahajan and Mel Vasen, Grampians Health; and Marcus Lim, RMIT University.

Hospital 150 year celebrations with Healthcare Harrie

Throughout 2024 we have celebrated the milestone achievement of 150 years of the Wimmera Base Hospital.

Our younger members of the Horsham community joined in our celebrations through the 'Healthcare Harrie' colouring competition. Students were invited from local primary schools and kindergartens to unleash their creativity - and they didn't disappoint! Over 150 entries were received which made the judging very difficult. In the end two prizes were awarded for each age group (kindergarten - prep; grades 1-3; grades 4-6).

Grampians Health's Deputy Chief Medical Officer Andre Nel and Volunteer Coordinator Kellie McMaster attended the schools of the winners during term 4 to present them with their prize packs and certificates. Congratulations to Maisie, Calista, Bree, Olivia, Sienna and Pippa who were our fantastic winners.

All of our entries were on display at the Horsham Plaza throughout the September school holidays, for the community to view and admire.

Thank you to everyone who participated in and helped make our 150 year celebrations so special.



(Left) the winning entries and (above) our fantastic winners, being presented with their prizes by Deputy Chief Medical Officer Andre Nel.



ARE YOU OUR NEXT VOLUNTEER?



Would you like to make a positive impact in your community, share life skills, meet great people and be part of a wonderful team?

We are seeking new volunteers to fill a variety of roles across our many volunteer programs.

We welcome conversations relating to how volunteering can best work for you!

Scan the QR code to fill out an expression of interest form or contact Volunteer Services for more information.

**E: volunteers-west@gh.org.au
P: 5381 9347**



URGENT CARE

When it can't wait,
but it's not an emergency



When you need medical attention that can't wait, consider urgent care (if your condition is not life-threatening).

Urgent care – in person, online or on the telephone – is a well equipped medical service which health professionals have used for some time. It is now available to you, too.

Keep this page handy, so when you need care you know where to go. And remember, keep yourself well with routine visits to your GP, and by following health advice.



Routine care

When you have a medical issue, but it's not urgent or life-threatening, you can make an appointment with your GP / doctor. Many GPs now have same-day appointments.



Urgent care

When you need care that needs immediate attention before your next GP appointment. This can include:

Skin allergies & insect bites

- A rash without pain, vomiting or fever
- Swelling of limbs, fingers, toes, etc (oedema)
- Insect stings
- Spider bites

Infections

- Teeth / toothache
- Sinus
- Respiratory (coughs and colds)
- Small skin wounds (red and inflamed)

Injuries

- Sprains, strains
- Small bones (toes, fingers, ankles, wrists)
- Minor burns (not deep but is red & irritated)

Ear, nose, throat & eye

- Small things stuck in the ear, nose or eye
- Nose bleeds
- Suspected tonsillitis
- Sinus issues

Aches and pains

- Headaches
- Sore arms or legs
- Back pain
- Neck pain

Stomach complaints

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Constipation
- Urinary Tract Infections

Women's health & obstetric

- Early pregnancy bleed
- Menstrual issues
- Early Mastitis

Other general issues

- Falls or mobility concerns
- Wound dressings
- Abnormal test results



Emergency care

Emergency or life-threatening illnesses and injuries require immediate medical attention and management by an emergency department or hospital. Call triple zero (000) if this applies to you.

Sometimes it is difficult to know if your condition is life-threatening, in which case you should call triple zero (000) or go to your nearest emergency department.

Always access emergency care, not urgent care, for:

- Chest pain or tightness
- Breathing difficulties
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Severe burns
- Poisoning
- Numbness or paralysis
- Unconsciousness
- Unresponsiveness
- Seizures
- Ongoing fever in infants

Source: <https://www.health.gov.au/find-a-medicare-ucc/when-to-visit>

Urgent Care Options

When you need immediate care, but it isn't life-threatening

Virtual Emergency Department

(Online service – smart phone or computer with camera required)
No appointment necessary | Free service
24 hours, 7 days
Interpreter services available
vved.org.au

Health Direct (Nurse on call)

(Telephone service)
No appointment necessary | Free service
24 hours, 7 days
1300 60 60 24

National Home Doctor (Health Direct)

(Telephone service) After hours GP clinic
Bulk-billed for eligible Medicare card holders | Booking lines open:
6pm weekdays, 12 noon Saturday, all day Sunday and public holidays
13SICK (137 425)

Doctors on Demand

(Online service – smart phone or computer with camera required)
An out-of-pocket fee applies to most appointments.
Book online 24 hours, 7 days
doctorsondemand.com.au

Helplines

- Pregnancy Birth and Baby Hotline 1800 882 436
- Victorian Poisons Information Centre 131 126
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
- Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1800 806 292
- Safe Steps Family Violence Centre 1800 015 188
- Rainbow Door (LGBTIQ+) 1800 729 367
- Kids Helpline 1800 511 800
- 13YARN 13 92 76

GPs and Medical Centres

Find your closest medical service at healthdirect.gov.au

Lister House Medical Clinic

Co-payment/Appointment required
9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, 9am – 12pm Saturday
Ph: 5382 0011
146 Baillie Street, Horsham

Horsham Doctors

Co-payment/Appointment required
8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday, 10am – 6pm weekends
Ph: 4336 4099
1C Madden Street, Horsham

Emergency Departments

For life-threatening emergencies, chest pain or uncertainty

Call Triple Zero (000) or proceed to your nearest Emergency Dept.

Wimmera Base Hospital

No fee
24 hours, 7 days
Ph: 5381 9111
Access from Baillie Street



Emergency: call Triple Zero (000)
Urgent but not life threatening: see options at top of page
Not urgent: see your regular GP

my.gh.org.au/emergency